

## ENT SERVICES IN NEPAL

In the Era of "Global Health" there is huge inequalities existing from no health care access for people in underdeveloped countries to over-investigation and over-treatment for people in developed countries. Current population of Nepal is about 26 million. There are 82 registered ENT Surgeons in Nepal, out of which around 70 are still actively practicing, although the actual number may probably be lower because of retirement and death. In other word there is one ENT Surgeon for every 3,71,428 persons, in addition the distribution of practitioners is heavily skewed towards the urban areas.

At present, there are around eight centers which provide the ENT training. But majority of centre lack proper quality, standard and guidance, so only few centers offer good quality training. There are around 10000 ENT surgeries done every year in various general hospital, medical colleges and tertiary level hospital besides the surgeries done in private hospitals. Number of centers offering the ENT services/surgeries are very few in comparison to burden of diseases. An elective ENT surgical case still has to wait around two months to one year to get operated, depending on the center.

In Nepal ENT services are hampered by economic constraints, meager health budgets, poor infrastructure and shortage of trained medical staff. In addition, ENT service funding has to complete with the budgetary demands of life threatening infectious diseases, so ENT practice in Nepal differs merely from high technology, high cost practice of developed world.

Medical missions such as Ear Camps fill an important niche in countries and regions where there is little prospect of ENT services being developed but in countries like Nepal and regions which are able to develop their own services, such missions should not be encouraged. In such cases, the emphasis should be on assisting to establish and support local ENT training facilities.

More than fifty percent of world's population resides in developing countries, which also accounts for more than 80 percent of world disability and disease related to ENT. So Nepal and other developing countries should face these challenges through collaborative efforts by training ENT surgeon and support personel, retaining them, establishment of dedicated ENT institutes which focus on special need of ENT patients.

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